



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 17, 2022

**Media Contact:**

Jessie Greene

[Jessie.Greene@tn.gov](mailto:Jessie.Greene@tn.gov)

615.741.1318

**Tennessee Higher Education Commission Announces FAFSA Challenge to Kick-Start Momentum-Building Year for College Enrollment**

*Education leaders across the state are encouraging students to complete the FAFSA by March 1 to take advantage of financial aid dollars being left on the table*

**NASHVILLE, TN** - The 2023-24 [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) officially opened on Friday, October 1, 2022, for students who plan to attend college. Students who complete the FAFSA are more likely to enroll in higher education, persist in their college coursework and obtain a degree.

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission recently announced three big goals for 2023 to serve as a momentum-building year, with the first being increasing the college-going rate for the high school class of 2023 to at least 60 percent.

That is why the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation are hosting the second annual [TN FAFSA Challenge](#) in order to increase the FAFSA completion rate among students in Tennessee and to open the door to scholarships, grants and other forms of financial aid that can kick-start college and career success.

High schools competing in the TN FAFSA Challenge have the opportunity to be recognized for outstanding achievement in three categories: Highest completion rate, most improved completion rate, and FAFSA Champion. Schools will compete in the challenge with schools of similar size.

There are two ways a high school can earn FAFSA Champion status:

- Increase their Tennessee Promise applicant FAFSA completion rate by 5 percentage points or more compared to the previous academic year as of the Tennessee Promise FAFSA deadline.
- Have 90% or more of their Tennessee Promise applicants complete the FAFSA as of the Tennessee Promise FAFSA deadline.

Completing the FAFSA is one of the most important steps in making college affordable. This year, the official TN Promise FAFSA deadline has been permanently moved to March 1, 2023.

While many schools will have higher FAFSA completion rates by the time students graduate, additional state funding, institutional dollars, and private scholarships may be available if the FAFSA is completed earlier in their senior year of high school.

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation have curated a number of resources for students and schools to support Tennessee's FAFSA completion efforts. [Student resources](#) include step-by-step FAFSA-filing instructions and videos. [School resources](#) include guides focused on helping high schools strengthen their FAFSA completion numbers.

###

#### **ABOUT THEC:**

The [Tennessee Higher Education Commission](#) is relentlessly focused on increasing the number of Tennesseans with a post secondary credential. We pursue this goal by innovating for student access and success, creating a policy environment conducive to increased degree attainment, and protecting students and consumers.

For more information on THEC and the TN FAFSA Challenge, visit <https://www.collegefortn.org/tn-fafsa-challenge/>